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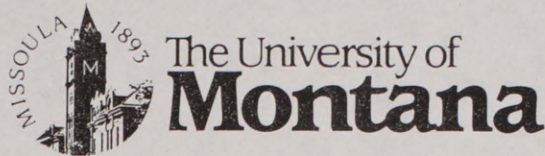
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NEWS RELEASE

Oct. 31, 2002

Contact: Mick Hanson, director, UM Financial Aid Office, 243-5504.

UM REPORT SHOWS INCREASED FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

MISSOULA --

When University of Montana administrator Mick Hanson recently completed a required application for federal funds for student financial aid, he was pleased to report that state grants and scholarships at UM were up by nearly 50 percent in the 2001-02 academic year from academic year 2000-01.

UM's state and institutional funding grew from \$1.5 million in 2000-01 to \$2.3 million in 2001-02. Hanson, director of UM's Financial Aid Office, credits the growth to three main areas: an increase in Montana Tuition Assistance Program dollars from the state Legislature and from institutional interest earnings; higher enrollment of American Indian and Montana high school honor students who qualify for state-mandated fee waivers; and support from the Student Assistance Foundation, a nonprofit organization headquartered in Helena.

The number of American Indian students at UM who received state-mandated fee waivers rose by 12 percent from the 2000-01 to the 2001-02 academic year. UM also is garnering a larger percentage of Montana high school graduates than ever before, Hanson said. The top 4 percent of the state's high school honors students also qualify for fee waivers, and the number of honors student at UM grew by 16 percent from 2000-01 to 2001-02.

The University also received more than \$100,000 from the Student Assistance

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Foundation during 2001-02. SAF funds are used to provide Access grants to students who qualify based on financial need. The University is one of fifteen schools statewide that receives Access grant funding.

"While we are grateful for the increased support during the 2001-02 academic year, we know that the nation's economy may profoundly affect the ability of the UM Foundation, the Montana Legislature and private organizations to maintain the current level of support for student grants and scholarships," Hanson said.

Despite the current economic situation, Hanson said he, his staff and others at the University will continue to strive to find and secure funding sources to help UM students with their financial needs.

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